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THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

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E. T. HARGROVE, President.

Each member is invited to send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Members should be careful to write distinctly and on one side of the paper only.

In sending questions, or answers to questions, whenever an assertion is made that such and such is a doctrine, or that "it is said in Theosophical literature," and the like, the name of author, article, volume, and page referred to must be given.

All communications should be addressed to **The Editor, Theosophical Forum, 144 Madison Avenue, New York City.**

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QUESTION 84.

In A.B.G.'s answer to Question 70 occurs the following: "'Accidental Karma,' as described by Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita." Does this refer to the following in Chapter iv, "He is contented with whatever he receives fortuitously"? Is it correct to call this "accidental Karma"? Is there "accidental Karma"?

C. Thurston.—Accidental Karma is a proper rendering of the idea related to the context of A.B.G.'s reply to the question before him. He apparently did not profess to be regarding Karma *per se*, which faultlessly equilibrates all discord upon the causative centre that created it. The present question seems to discount beforehand any attempt to establish the accidental as having any relation to the immutable; but until we have "solved the problems of the mysteries that encompass us in life, and lie before us in the future beyond the change that men call death," the unexpected, the fortuitous, the accidental will continue to discredit the forecasts of astrology—unless the horoscope be cast by one having the Deva Eye, "the eye for which there is no veil."

I should have preferred in A.B.G.'s case the phrase "Unforeseen Karma" which, however, still resolves the idea into the accidental and fortuitous as applied to relativity. To illustrate, our physical body is the outward expression of the Karmic adjustment of the sum total of our past bodies so far attained to objectively. This adjustment is an unstable equilibrium or balance that is constantly oscillating within a limited arc only—the limiting range of the Karma which that body is fitted to expend, *i.e.*, the Karma that is normal to it.

But the informing Ego can, and often does, increase the rapidity of the oscillation until the normal Karma is exhausted at an early stage of the body's life span, and then may occur that mysterious process of one inspiring soul retiring to give place to one greater, the advent of which precipitates upon that vehicle a Karma that originally had no relation to it. It becomes literally a scapegoat and suffers vicariously. Whatever the Sanskrit may offer, our tongue affords no phrase so completely expressive as "accidental" when describing the consequences to that body of such an invasion.

Furthermore the *Gita* dwells throughout, and not alone in the passage referred to, on the apparently fortuitous assemblage of the three qualities, and its entire motive is the ascension above that field,—the mother or feminine aspect that ceaselessly constructs but to destroy, in which the three qualities forever fortuitously clash.

To the direct question "is there Accidental Karma (*per se*)?" there can be but one answer, *i.e.*, The whole assemblage of things rests upon immutable causation.

K. H.—I do not know what A.B.G. means by "accidental Karma as described in the *Bhagavad-Gita*." In the first place, there can be no such thing as *accidental* Karma, for what is Karma but the law of the *unerring* sequence of cause and effect? That which seems to us an accident could often be explained as an inevitable consequence of something that we are too shortsighted or too ignorant to take into account. "He is contented with whatever he receives fortuitously," simply refers to the things that the wise man receives from others, without volition or action of his own. "Having met good or evil, he neither rejoiceth at the one nor is cast down by the other." (Chap. II.)

J. H. Fussell.—Not being a Sanskrit scholar I do not know whether the sentence as given is a correct rendering of the original but taking it as it stands it certainly seems in perfect harmony with the general tenor of the book. It occurs in the description of a wise man and the evident meaning is that such a man is free from attachment to results, is contented with that which he receives each moment, acts without expectation, is not solicitous of results, seeks nothing and nothing rejects, to whom gold and stone are the same. All these statements are really explanatory of the one under discussion or at least contain the same root idea. And in no sense could they be taken to refer to *accidental* Karma, using the word "accidental" in its commonly accepted sense. I do not think that accident or chance as ordinarily understood has any place in the Theosophical philosophy or indeed any existence at all. If used according to their original meaning these words refer to that which is not looked

for, or the cause of which may not be known, and in this sense the word "fortuitous" is in entire harmony with the above.

Accidental Karma is an unfortunate and misleading term unless the etymological meaning of the word "accident" be kept in mind. And using the word in its true sense, accident and Karma are not contradictory. An effect, happening, or event, not due to a cause, is unthinkable, but the cause may be unknown or separated from the effect by a long period of time, perhaps many lives. Hence if we use the term "accident" to cover such cases, the phrase "accidental Karma" is not incorrect, but owing to the popular idea of "accident" its use is liable to be misleading.

A. B. G.—The definition of the word "fortuitous," which is generally accepted, is "that which occurs by chance, as opposed to design." If the original Sanskrit term is translated correctly by the word "fortuitous," then the word "chance" should, and must be substituted to express the intended sense. Any labored discussion relative to an uncertain hypothesis will only result in confusion and may be productive of much misconception; and, therefore, until the original has been consulted by a competent authority, and his conclusion verified by collateral testimony, I am of the opinion that it is inexpedient to continue the discussion. I am aware that the above does not answer the question. "Is there accidental Karma?" but the form of the query relates that question to the quotation from Chap. iv. of the *Bhagavad Gita*, and cannot be dissociated from the idea of *fortuitous, chance or accident*, until stated without any such entanglement.

Charles Johnston.—The verse quoted from *Bhagavad Gita*, Ch. iv., which must be taken with the preceding verse, might be rendered more literally, as follows:

"Without selfish hopes, with imagination held in check, rid of every grasping desire, doing work with the body only, he incurs no evil;

"*Contented with whatever comes to him of its own free will*, risen above two sidedness, free from envy, equal in success and unsuccess,—he, even performing works, is not bound." [Bh. G., iv., 21–22.]

This does not contain the idea suggested, of "accidental Karma." For the subject of Karma in the *Bhagavad Gita* see the *Metaphysical Magazine* for July and August, '96.

Question 85.

It has been said by many students that the effect of a knowledge of the doctrine of Karma in the Western World would be to make men realize that they are responsible beings and that all their acts and thoughts must meet with due effect. Now, except they be born Theosophists, I doubt this very much, unless they knew at the same time the doctrine of the Septenary

Constitution of Man, because the knowledge of this is alone capable of making men realize their individual relation to the All. I cannot see how the doctrines of Karma and even Reincarnation can give to the general public that courage and incentive to endeavor which are so necessary to enable them to keep up the battle of life. May we not point to the India of to-day as a result of the mere intellectual knowledge of Karma and Reincarnation?

J. H. Fussell.—The knowledge of a doctrine may be very good in its way, but it amounts to very little if it is mere knowledge, a mere intellectual conception, and if it does not find its effect in actual life. And this applies just as much to the doctrine of the Septenary Constitution as to that of Karma and Reincarnation. But, to me, one of the most interesting and beautiful things in Theosophy is the interrelation between all the various theosophical doctrines. Theosophy is a harmonious whole and no jugglery or mental reservations are needed in order to see the mutual corroboration of theosophical doctrines.

To fully understand Karma involves also an understanding of Reincarnation, the Constitution of Man, Perfectibility of Man, Cycles, Man's relation to God and Nature; in a word to fully understand any one part it is necessary to understand the whole. But even a partial knowledge would not fail of its effect. And surely it is not unreasonable to suppose that a partial knowledge of Karma and Reincarnation, even if nothing be known of the Septenary Constitution of Man, would result in a sense of increased personal responsibility. Certainly its tendency would be in that direction. It will also be evident that a knowledge of the Septenary Nature of Man is not of itself "capable of making man realize his individual relation to the All"—to quote from the question.

We all have too great a tendency to label and particularize and to put some pet idea forward as if it were a patent medicine and a panacea for all ills. We need broader, larger views of life, to learn that the smallest and most insignificant things have their place and use and purpose and that not even the greatest being can stand alone and apart from the rest. This is true also of ideas; all true ideas and, we may say, all true doctrines are interrelated and interdependent and the explanation of life will not be found in any one but in all. Whether the India of to-day is the result of mere intellectual knowledge of Karma and Reincarnation or not I do not know, but I think a great many other causes have combined to bring India to the position which she now occupies.

Mere intellectual comprehension of anything avails little. The goal of life will never be reached by intellectual processes, but by living and becoming.

T. Whitman.—Fancy some oriental kingdom where there seemed to

be very poor laws and government and scarcely any police force or facilities for detecting crime and wrong. Suppose that the people said to themselves: "There is no government, the strong oppress and wrong the weak, and go unpunished, the thief steals and the hater murders and both remain uncaught." Would there be, think you, in that country—with the human nature we see about us,—any great stimulus to virtue? I think not.

Suppose, then, that the people suddenly discovered that instead of living in a state of anarchy, as they had thought, there was, in fact, the most complete and perfect system of law imaginable, but that its workings were carried on often in secret and by unknown agents, but absolutely justly and impartially. What would the effect be, think you? Doubtless the oppressor would cry out "this is monstrous, cruel," and the robber and murderer would say "This is outrageous, demoralizing." But for all that would not the conduct of men—considering again the human nature around us—change utterly. The bank clerk could no longer hope to escape if he sought to falsify the acounts, the adventurer could not hope to gain his ends by trickery, and the rich man could no more seek with impunity to get away with a farthing that belonged to a poor man than the poor man could hope to get dishonestly anything away from a rich man or any one else.

One may venture to assert that, crime, oppression, and wrong would practically disappear from any country in which the existence of such a perfect system of law and reädjustment should be discovered. There might be a rebellion—if the lawless were strong enough—but otherwise people would settle down to the new condition, and forget that they were once strongly tempted to cheat or injure others or seek to get ahead in any way unfairly.

The difference in these two cases is as great as the difference between an undisciplined mob and an orderly army. Yet it is the difference between the—civilized so-called—world of to-day and the world of to-morrow which shall understand the law and workings of Karma.

The seven principles have, directly, nothing to do with it, any more than in the case of the country we have fancied, it would matter whether or not the people knew just how and by whom the law was administered or who was the king—so long as they realized that the law did exist and that it was just, impartial, and immutable.

QUESTION 86.

How can there be such a thing as the death of the soul, or the second death when it is said in the Bhagavad Gita, "It is without birth and meeteth not death," and also, "Thou and I never were not nor all the princes of the Earth, nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be?"

G. L. G.—This question arises from misunderstanding. In the two passages quoted from the *Gita*, it is the Higher Self, the *spirit* which is referred to. This truly never dies. But the death of the *soul* is another matter. The soul is not immortal *per se*, but gains its immortality through union with the spirit. When prolonged and unrelieved wickedness has made this union impossible, the bond between is permanently severed, and the soul gradually dies out, often incarnating many times, each time lower and lower and losing in force, while the bright, deathless Spirit begins over again its pilgrimage, commencing of necessity in the lower kingdoms.

J. H. Fussell.—If the quotation from the *Bhagavad Gita*, given above, refers to the soul in the same sense as this word is used in the first part of the question then manifestly the two statements are contradictory. But the word Soul is used with various meanings—at one time referring to the immortal, divine Ego and at another to the personal, mortal Ego. If the Higher Ego be immortal there can of course be no death of the soul in that sense. The following quotations are taken from what H.P.B. has written on this subject:

"The human soul, lower Manas, is the *only* and direct mediator between the personality and the divine Ego. That which goes to make up on this earth the *personality*, miscalled *individuality* by the majority, is the sum of all its mental, physical, and spiritual characteristics, which, being impressed on the human soul, produces the *man*. Now, of all these characteristics it is the purified thoughts alone which can be impressed on the higher, immortal Ego. This is done by the human soul merging again, in its essence, into its parent source, commingling with its divine Ego during life and reüniting itself entirely with it after the death of the physical man. Therefore, unless Kama Manas transmits to Buddhi-Manas such personal ideations, and such consciousness of its "I" as can be assimilated by the divine Ego, nothing of that "I" or personality can survive in the Eternal." * * *

"'Soul' refers indifferently to Buddhi-Manas and Kama-Manas. As to the term 'second death,' the qualification 'second' applies to several deaths which have to be undergone by the 'principles' during their incarnation, Occultists alone understanding fully the sense in which such a statement is made. For we have (1) the death of the Body; (2) the death of the Animal Soul in Kama Loka; (3) the death of the Astral, Linga Sarira, following that of the Body; (4) the metaphysical death of the Higher Ego, the *immortal*, every time it 'falls into matter,' or incarnates in a new personality."

By the death of the soul is meant the severance of the connection between the divine immortal Ego—Buddhi-Manas and the personal Ego

or soul—Kama-Manas during earth-life. When this happens, the personal soul Kama-Manas is doomed to annihilation. There is in such case nothing immortal there; if there were it could not have become separated from its divine parent, the immortal Ego—Buddhi Manas. Another phrase that is used to describe this terrible calamity is "the loss of the Soul," and it is a loss, both from the standpoint of the higher and from that of the lower. The divine Ego, in such case, loses an instrument through which it works on the physical plane and in which it reflects itself. The lower personal Ego losing all connection with the Higher, becomes like a rudderless vessel adrift on the stormy sea of human passions, doomed to perish. This terrible fate however can happen only when evil has been persistently followed and for its own sake and when there is no longer a single aspiration towards the higher nature.

Now, in regard to the quotation from the *Bhagavad Gita*, I think that the "thou" and "I" refer to the divine immortal soul, the true Ego, concerning whom it is said in the Secret Doctrine: "The thread of radiance which is imperishable and dissolves only in Nirvana, re-emerges from it in its integrity on the day when the Great Law calls all things back into action." * * *

It will be seen therefore that the two statements are not contradictory, the confusion arising simply from the varied meanings attached to the word "soul." In the *Key to Theosophy*, H. P. B. says: "Soul being a generic term, there are in men three aspects of soul: (1) the terrestrial or animal; (2) the human soul; and (3) the spiritual soul; these, strictly speaking, are one soul in its three aspects. Now, of the first aspect nothing remains after death; of the second, *nous* or Manas, only its divine essence, *if left unsoiled*, survives; while the third, in addition to being immortal, becomes *consciously* divine by the assimilation of the Higher Manas."

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION.

FOR THE USE OF BRANCHES.

THEOSOPHY.

Meaning of the word; *theo* a Greek stem meaning divine or Godlike; *sophia* the Greek word for knowledge or wisdom. The compound of the two first used by the Neoplatonists, Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus and their school in Third Century A. D., but the underlying principle and meaning as old as time. The definition generally given of Theosophy in dictionaries: "Divine wisdom; godliness; a name given to those systems of philosophy which profess to attain a special insight into the divine nature by spiritual illumination, direct intuition, etc." *Century Dictionary* adds "Theosophy starts with an assumed knowledge of God, directly obtained through spiritual intercommunication and proceeds therefrom to a study and explanation of phenomena." Idea is that Man is fundamentally one with God and hence may know God and everything in the universe directly. This right in line with 3d Fundamental Proposition of the *Secret Doctrine:* The "identity of

all souls with the universal oversoul." H. P. B. elsewhere declares the first object of the Esoteric Sciences to be to *prove* that man is "identical in spiritual and physical essence with both the Absolute Principle and with God in Nature." Hence the name Theosophy well chosen by H P. B. for its meaning, both by derivation and by common acceptance, contains the basic idea of the philosophy taught by H. P. B.

Theosophy is the synthesis of science, religion and philosophy. It is not a science or a religion but the root and essence of all sciences, all religions. It must therefore include all knowledge, all truth. The fundamental ideas set forth by H. P. B., the greatest modern exponent of Theosophy, are: (1) The absolute unity of all spiritual beings. (2) The universality of law. (3) Universal progress.

REFERENCES.

Dictionaries, Encyclopædias, Secret Doctrine, Isis Unveiled, etc.

SUCCESSIVE LIVES ON EARTH.

The belief universal in the past and widely spread to-day. This alone able to explain the meaning and purpose of life. Belief in the soul or immortality inconsistent and illogical unless we accept idea of return to earth. It alone explains (a) the inequality of birth and advantages of education and environment; (b) the possibility of justice in the above; (c) the diversity of character, impossible to account for on grounds of environment or heredity; (d) attachments, either by love or hatred; (e) the purpose and end of human experience, etc. The common objection that we do not remember, etc. Theosophical explanation of this, the higher, immortal Ego and the personality which fades out at death.

REFERENCES.

Walker's *Reincarnation;* Anderson's *Reincarnation; Ocean of Theosophy*, Chapters viii-x; *Key to Theosophy*, Sections viii and xi.

FAITH.

"The embodied Soul being gifted with faith, each man is of the same nature as that ideal on which his faith is fixed." The "faith" of each one proceeds from the *sattva* quality, yet the faith may belong to anyone of the three qualities,—*Sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas*. (*Bhagavad Gita*, Chap. xvii.) Faith in his Master's power to teach and his own power to learn, *shradda*, is one of the "six qualifications" necessary for discipleship. "Faith is a great engine, an enormous driving power which can in fact accomplish all things. For it is the covenant between man's divine part and his lesser self. * * * [It is] necessary in order to obtain intuitive knowledge." (*Light on the Path*, Comments II.) The distinction between faith and belief (see *Key*, Sec. xi, p. 193)." But those who seek * * * full of faith * * * are my most beloved—(Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*).

REFERENCES.

Bhagavad Gita, Chapters xii and xvii; *Key to Theosophy*, Section xi; *Light on the Path*, Comments II. *Man*, Chapter x; *Letters that Have Helped Me.*

THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN.

The future of our country and of the world depends upon the children of the present, and the responsibility of their proper education rests upon us. The need of proper ethical and religious instruction. The average Sunday school unfortunate place to send children, where are still taught dogmas discarded by intelligence and intuition alike, such as original sin, man as being something different and apart from God, his being saved by a formal "belief," his going to heaven or hell, and the like. Hence the need of Lotus Circles. The home the best place for a child's instruction. If America is the nursery for the coming race then we may expect great souls to incarnate here in the near future and should strive to make the conditions as advantageous as possible. A great work possible for the uplifting of humanity through the making of better conditions for children.

REFERENCES.

"The Children of Theosophists," by James M. Pryse, in *Theosophy* for December, 1896; *Key to Theosophy*, Section xiii, p. 235.

THEOSOPHICAL NEWS AND WORK.

ARYAN T. S. had as topics for discussion in November, "Devachan and Nirvana," "Intuition and Reason," "Heredity" and "Cycles." Mr. C. Johnston, who arrived from Ireland on the last day of October, gave an interesting lecture on November 15th on "Our Real Selves." Both the Sunday and Tuesday meetings are well attended and the discussions at the branch meetings are nearly always both interesting and of value.

THE H. P. B. BRANCH has had Sunday Lectures as follows: "Humanity in the Past, Present and Future," by Miss A. M. Stabler; "Reïncarnation," by Mr. J. W. Ganson; "The Personality and Individuality," by Miss Rose Winkler; "The Rounds," by Miss K. Hillard; "The Adepts," by Mr. J. H. Fussell; "Theosophy and Human Needs," by Dr. E. B. Guild; "Karma and the Masters," by Dr. T. P. Hyatt; and "The Future of America," by Mr. J. H. Fussell. The audiences were interested and responsive. The Branch has been actively engaged in furthering the work of the Home Crusade, believing that its success depends largely upon the efforts of each member. A collection is taken up at the Sunday lectures to assist in carrying on the work of this Crusade. The Branch Committees have been reörganized and various activities have been undertaken.

VARUNA BRANCH (Bridgeport, Conn.) carried its meetings successfully through the summer season without the usual break during the heat of July and August. In September the President, Mrs. T. J. Wilkins, presented the subject of Theosophy at a "symposium" in Shelton, Conn., a large audience listening with close attention to her address. The branch has been doing hard work this fall and having excellent meetings.

ROXBURY T. S. has doubled its membership during the last month.

PORTLAND T. S. The work in Maine is progressing rapidly. One of our members reports encouraging work at Bangor, Augusta and Belfast, and Portland itself has been much aroused by a visit and lectures from Mr. George Ayers of Boston, who gave five lectures here November 15th-17th, in the branch hall. Most of the audiences were crowded and patiently sat nearly two hours, about half of the time being devoted to answering questions.

SYRACUSE T. S. served a Thanksgiving Brotherhood Dinner on the 26th, to about 125 people, the dinner consisting of soup, roast pork, potatoes, salad and pie. On the following night a Home Crusade meeting was held.

BLAVATSKY T. S., of Washington, D. C., has moved into winter quarters in the Lenman Building, 1425 New York Avenue, occupying commodious rooms, two in number, well-lighted and heated, where two lectures are given on Sunday at 11 in the morning and 8 in the evening, respectively, and the regular Branch meeting at 8 o'clock P.M. every Thursday, where the members read papers or make short addresses upon the topic of the evening, taken from the FORUM, after which questions are asked and answered. A new feature of the meetings is the introduction of music before the business of the evening. The audiences are larger this year than last and there is quite a wave of interest in Theosophical thought as evinced in a steady demand for leaflets.

The entertainment for the Crusade fund given by the Branch, October 29, 1896, proved very successful, quite a crowd attending and learning thereby what is meant by the "Theosophical Crusade." The program consisted of dramatic recitals, by a member of the Branch, assisted by a gentleman interested in Theosophy, vocal music, mandolin and banjo duets, and afterwards palmistry and fortune-telling, a table of fancy articles (the color purple predominating), candy table, pictures of our leaders, Theosophical badges, etc. The rooms were beautifully decorated with purple drapery, flags and pennons; palms and cut flowers added to the effect, which was most artistic, the gentlemen of the Branch doing the decorating under the brotherly (or rather sisterly) supervision of the executive committee, to whose cheerful labor and excellent taste the success of the entertainment was largely due. The returns so far amount to between fifty and sixty dollars.

PITTSBURG T. S. had lectures in November as follows: 1st, "The Higher Self and the Higher Ego," by Mr. M. A. Oppermann; 8th, "Suicide," by Miss K. Hartman; 15th, "Heredity," by Mrs. M. Seeley; 22d, "Christ and Theosophy," by Mrs. C. H. Beach; and 29th, "Reïncarnation," by Mr. M. M. Jones.

WARREN T. S. (Penn.) holds meetings regularly Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons at 310 Third Street. Mr. Smythe gave two public lectures here Oct. 31st and Nov. 1st.

DAYTON T. S. The work in Dayton goes on steadily. One meeting a week was held throughout the hot months, these being always open to the public. Public lectures are now given by Brother G. E. Harter every Sunday evening to good audiences—sometimes overflowing our present limited seating capacity. An "S. D." class of seventeen members has been organized, which meets for study on Wednesday evenings. A Lotus Circle has also been started, under the earnest and capable leadership of Mrs. Eva Best. In addition to his work in the branch, President Harter gave weekly parlor talks in Dayton View during the summer. He has also found time to visit Middletown at frequent intervals and talk to a class there, with the result that a branch has recently been chartered in that city.

BLUFFTON T. S. is one of our small branches, but at the same time one of the most interested. Regular meetings have been held since September 21st, and the recent visit from Mr. Smythe, which the members greatly enjoyed, has had the effect of stirring up no little interest in the town.

BROTHERHOOD SETTLEMENT in Chicago. Mrs. A. B. Leonard and Mr. J. D. Leonard have rented the first floor in a house in Princeton Avenue. The front room was formerly a store and this has been fitted up as a meeting room. It will hold about 75 persons. The first meeting will be held on Saturday evening, November 21, and it will be a Brotherhood Supper. It is intended to have these suppers from time to time, and classes and meetings will be organized. The neighborhood abounds in children and a Lotus Circle and a boys' club will be formed. Mr. S. Stern, of New York, Col. L. R. Steward and other members of Chicago have been giving great help in starting this Brotherhood Settlement.

SAGA BRANCH is the only branch in the T. S. A. using the Scandinavian languages and working solely amongst our Scandinavian born population. We have a wide field here in Chicago, but as there are three millions of our country-people in the U. S. our work could be largely extended and propaganda be done in all parts of the country having a large Scandinavian population—the New England States, New York, the North-West and the Pacific Coast,—if branches and centres in different parts of the country would co-operate with us by announcing our "existence" to their members, and obtaining addresses of Scandinavian Societies, or persons, who would be willing to distribute pamphlets in Danish, Norwegian and Swedish in the Scandinavian districts or settlements. Any branch or any person willing to aid us in this manner will kindly address

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY, *Sâgâ Branch*,
153 E. Washington St., Room 9, Chicago, Ill.

UNITY T. S. (St. Paul, Minn.) has moved into another room, 251 Endicott Building; it is twice as large as the old one and far pleasanter, but in the same building. Mrs. Stevens, the president, has given the branch the use of her Steinway grand piano, and the branch expects to enjoy good music this winter. For systematic study, the *Key to Theosophy* has been begun, and is proving of great value. The branch is looking forward with great expectations to the coming of the Crusaders, and doing everything possible to prepare for them. The other evening a house-warming and Crusade benefit was given with an attendance of about a hundred, the program including a Crusade speech, music and refreshments. A very nice amount was made in this way for the Crusade fund.

DANA T. S. (Sioux City, Iowa) held a Purple Fair on the 14th and 15th of October and realized $85.00 for the Crusade fund.

PACIFIC COAST ITEMS.

NEVER BEFORE on the North Pacific Coast was there such genuine interest taken in Theosophy by so large a number. The present trip of the Pacific Coast Lecturer began in August last, and at all points his lectures have been attended by crowds. Press reports of lectures given have been long and more frequent than on previous trips.

BRITISH COLUMBIA is a part of the Pacific Coast, and its people also belong to the 6th Sub Race. National and Occult boundaries are not always identical and are not as regards the Pacific Coast. Indeed, as Theosophical teachings spreadand the spirit of Theosophy prevails, all racial and national restrictions disappear, and the common bond of universal brotherhood asserts itself. Lectures given in Victoria were attended by greater numbers and more real interest was shown than upon any previous visit of the lecturer; a number of new members were also added to the branch. From Oct. 7th to 27th there were held almost every evening lectures, Quiz, Branch, Secret Doctrine or other meetings.

LECTURES were given in Nanaimo and Wellington, B. C., Oct. 29th and Nov. 1st, respectively. In the former city, other informal meetings were held and people ordered books for study. Theosophy was presented in these cities for the first time, and indications are that branches will soon be formed in them.

IN VANCOUVER, B. C., three lectures were given and a Quiz, all attended by crowds of the right kind of people. At the close of the course, many introduced themselves to the lecturer, expressed pleasure and profit derived, and gave cordial invitations to soon return. Bros. Thos. Parsons and B. A. Welbon have done and continue to do good work at that point. A Sunday 4 P.M. class has been organized which it is believed will soon resolve itself into an active branch. Long press reports were given of lectures, and the whole city waked up to the fact that Theosophy existed and had been sounded in Vancouver.

SPOKANE BRANCH (Wash.) is very active and earnest. A systematic course of study is pursued and members prepare short papers on the Seven Principles, which are fully discussed. Spokane is an important centre and fast becoming one of the most active. Athough the youngest branch on the coast its meetings are attended by about 20 members and visitors and the number is constantly increasing. The branch has the right idea,—which is to study Theosophy with the object of fitting members to properly present it to others. Success is sure to follow. The branch especially invites visiting members or inquirers to call at Room 507, Mohawk Block. One of the members is always in attendance. Meetings are held in the same room every Sunday evening.

NARADA T. S., of Tacoma, Washington, is as ever doing active and good work in all Theosophical lines, and the interest and attention of the public is continually being aroused. The Sunday evening public lectures are well attended by interested audiences. The following lectures were given during the month of October: 4th, "Cycles," by R. H. Lund; 11th, "Different Religions of the World," by George Sheffield; 18th, "How a Theosophist Reasons," by Jesse L. Greenbaum; and 25th, a Quiz meeting on "The After-Death States." Six new members have lately been added to our society, making our membership thirty-four, which will be increased before the beginning of the new year.

SAN FRANCISCO T. S. keeps up its good attendance at meetings. Subjects for November at Sunday lectures were: 1st, "Death and Its States of Consciousness," Dr. J. A. Anderson; 8th, "The Necessity for Rebirth," Mercie M. Thirds; 15th, "Why are Men Brothers?" James H. Griffes; 22d, "The Fundamental Law of the Universe," Dr. W. W. Gamble; 29th, "Cyclic Law," Edw. G. Merwin. The branch will devote the second Tuesday of each month to the Crusade, the regular programme being laid aside in favor of seven speakers. On Nov. 10 the speakers were Mercie M. Thirds, E. B. Rambo, J. H. Griffes, E. P. Jones, H. B. Monges, Harry T. Sproul and Dr. J. A. Anderson. On that evening the audience was 50 per cent. larger than on preceding Tuesdays. The class for beginners, under the direction of Mrs. Annie T. Bush, is doing good work and attracts quite a number of inquirers. Anna Bryce and Clara A. Brockman have transformed the Lotus Circle into a Brotherhood Sunday school, and have distributed cards among the school children on the south side.

LOS ANGELES BRANCH HEADQUARTERS have been rendered very neat and attractive by a new coat of paint. The following lectures have been given in Blavatsky Hall: Oct. 18, 11 A. M., "Desire and Will," H. A. Gibson; 7.45 P. M., "Do the Dead Return and How?" A. E. Gibson; Oct. 25, 11 A. M., "The Pyramids," H. A. Gibson; 7.45 P. M. "Yoga: The Science of the Soul," H. B. Leader; Nov. 1, 11 A. M., "The Power of Thought," H. A. Gibson; 7.45, "Symposium on Brotherhood," by Mrs. L. F. Weiersmuller and Messrs. H. B. Leader, Geo. Leitch, Abbott Clark and H. A. and A. E. Gibson; Nov. 8, 11 A. M., "First Steps Upon the Path," H. A. Gibson; 7.45 P. M., "The Power Behind the Throne," Abbott B. Clark. Other lectures have been given at Summerland, Ventura, Santa Monica, Toluca, Pasadena and East Los Angeles by Abbott Clark; at Clearwater and East Los Angeles, by Mrs. L. E. Giese; Downey, by A. E. Gibson, and at Amalie Mines, by Dr. G. F. Mohn. Two "Theosophical Home Crusade" meetings have been held, one in East Los Angeles, addressed by A. E. Gibson, Dr. W. T. Partridge, Mrs. L. F. Weiersmuller, Mrs. Frances Nellis, H. A. Gibson, H. B. Leader and Abbott Clark, and one in Pasadena addressed by Paul Heffleman, Abbott B. Clark, Dr. G. F. Mohn, H. B. Leader and H. A. Gibson. Special effort has been made to reach the children through their school teachers by mailing leaflets to each of the 400 teachers in this city.

SACRAMENTO T. S. is the name by which the Seventy-times-Seven T. S. of Sacramento, Calif., will hereafter be known. At a meeting held November 5th the branch by unanimous vote decided to change its name as above, and on November 25th, with consent of the Executive Committee, the change was made.

THEOSOPHICAL HOME CRUSADE.

IN NEW YORK meetings were held, on Nov. 1st, in the Crystal Building, 35th Street, near 9th Avenue, and on Nov. 16th in the small hall in Cooper Union. Both meetings were successful, the latter especially so. The hall seating 150 was packed and a number of men remained standing throughout the meeting. Such an interest in Theosophy was evinced by the audience that arrangements have been made for a course of four lectures to be given by Mr. Fussell in the same hall during December.

CINCINNATI. Dr. J. D. Buck gave a course of three "Theosophical Crusade lectures" on "The Pedigree of the Devil, or the Personification of Evil," "What Are The Mahatmas," and "The Meaning of Universal Brotherhood." The lectures were given in College Hall, Nov. 15th, 22d, and 29th, and an admission of 25 cents was charged, or 50 cents for the course.

DENVER. A Home Crusade meeting was held at Woodman Hall, South Denver, Sunday, Nov. 1, seven speakers giving ten-minute addresses on Crusades, Theosophy Past and Present, Reïncarnation, Karma, The Dynamic Power of Thought, and Ethics. The Denver Home Quintet gave a musical selection between each address. A fair audience, of entirely new people, gave close attention throughout, and all are much pleased with this new line of work and its probable results.

LOS ANGELES. A Theosophical Home Crusade meeting was held at Cambell's Hall, East Los Angeles, Thursday evening, October 29th, with the usual addresses upon Brotherhood and other Theosophical topics.

THE PACIFIC COAST THEOSOPHICAL COMMITTEE has appointed a committee consisting of Dr. W. W. Gamble, J. H. Griffes and Evan Williams to arrange for a Home Crusade in the small towns surrounding San Francisco. The general plan suggested is that the Crusade shall start about the first of the year and continue for nine weeks, or until the Crusaders arrive here from the Orient. It is proposed to send out two parties each week from among the members in San Francisco, Oakland and Alameda. Each party will consist of six speakers and four alternates. One band will take in about eleven towns on the San Francisco side of the bay, and another crowd will visit a similar number of places on the Oakland side. Special assaults will be made on the two university towns,—Berkeley and Palo Alto. The details have not been fully decided, and the next few weeks will be devoted to securing halls and advertising the project.

TOURS OF THEOSOPHICAL LECTURERS.

JAMES M. PRYSE arrived at Philadelphia, Nov. 6. Addressed Krishna Branch on 7th, and smaller group at Camden on 8th; arrived Baltimore, Nov. 9th, lectured to the branch and had private talks with members; arrived Washington, Nov. 12th, delivered two public lectures at the branch headquarters and one to branch members on methods of work; arrived at Augusta, Ga., Nov. 17th, lectured same evening on "Modern Theosophy"; on the 18th on "Missing Factors in Modern Life," and on the 19th on "Successive Lives on Earth," securing extended reports in local dailies; reached Macon, Ga., on the 20th, spoke at anniversary meeting on the evening of 21st on "Cycles," lectured Sunday, the 22d, at 3.30 P.M., at Academy of Music, to an audience of about 400, on "Philosophy, Science, and Religion," and in the evening at the branch rooms on "Reïncarnation"; lectured on the 23d to a special meeting of the branch on "Theosophy and Occultism," and spoke at the regular branch meeting Nov. 26th; arrived at Atlanta, Nov. 27th, and gave three lectures on the 27th, 28th and 29th, in Phillips and Crews Halls. At all points found working members active and full of interest, and the outside public friendly to the movement.

BURCHAM HARDING lectured Nov. 8th to a crowded audience in the hall of the Providence (R. I.) branch. The meeting was opened and closed with vocal and instrumental music. Years of earnest devotion and singleness of purpose have brought their reward to this branch. They are justly proud of their elegant hall, and its tasteful decorations; and feel confidence in inviting the public to identify themselves with the movement.

Nov. 9th he left New York to visit branches in the West up to the "Great Divide;" the 10th Youngstown, O., was reached, and an address given upon the "Crusade"; two evenings devoted to class work; E. S. T. meetings were held and a public lecture was attended by about 300 persons. The 13th a free "Brotherhood Supper" to 75 persons at Delmonico's restaurant was a great success. This branch although recently organized numbers forty members, and is rapidly increasing. The enthusiasm and activity are great, and all are eagerly desirous of practical Theosophy. When more suitable and permanent quarters are secured, the earnest enthusiasm evolved, which has already enlisted the newspapers, promises to capture the town.

The 14th some of the Toledo, O., members met Mr. Harding at the depot, spending an hour or two discussing Crusade work and Brotherhood suppers.

ALBERT E. S. SMYTHE left Toronto on November 16th, for a tour in Ohio and Indiana. A meeting of the Buffalo E. S. T. was held on the same evening, and an initial impulse given to the journey. Leaving Buffalo at midnight Toledo was reached early next morning and work at once inaugurated. Toledo Branch is strong socially, and its members are able to use their local influence to good effect. The *Bee* publishes a column devoted to Theosophy weekly, and the other papers are favorably disposed. An interview was published in one, and the Branch meeting on Tuesday evening was crowded. One clergyman was present who has been in sympathy with the movement, and after the next evening's lecture he asked for a form of application for membership. Out of six subjects for addresses which have been submitted "Theosophy and Christianity" has been almost invariably chosen. The Unitarian Church in Toledo was placed at the disposal of the Society by Rev. Mr. Jennings, and was filled for the lecture. Two persons traveled thirty miles to attend. Four clergymen were present, one of whom preached the following Sunday on "The Sophistry of Theosophy," to which a reply was printed in the *Blade* on the 28th. An E. S. T. meeting was held Wednesday noon, 18th inst. Fort Wayne was reached on the 19th. A branch meeting was held, and an address given that evening in the branch rooms on the Crusade. The Fort Wayne Society is so well established and meets with so little opposition that opportunity is scarcely afforded for sufficient exercise of its muscles. A Home Crusade among the poor was suggested and the idea readily taken up. The plan seems to be well adapted for localities and branches where for various reasons Brotherhood Suppers are not always practicable.

On Friday, 20th inst., an E. S. T. meeting was held. Saturday, the 21st, Bluffton was reached at 9 A. M., and a meeting of the branch, but recently established, held at 9.30. A scratch meeting was called for 2 P. M., and quite a number of locally important people attended. Dr. and Mrs. Cook expect to find a good field for work in this flourishing town. At Indianapolis nothing of any moment was done. A more vigorous public policy in Indianapolis appears to be desirable. At Louisville, Ky., a little earnest band of students have laid the foundations for a strong centre. Not only are fervor and devotion, but also an intelligent appreciation of the philosophy to be found, and in this spirit much has been done. The Music Hall had been engaged for Monday and Tuesday, 23d and 24th, and audiences of about 150 and 175 were present. The papers were courteous and fair, and much interest was aroused. Louisville is a most promising point. At Cincinnati on Wednesday, 25th inst., a members' reception was held from two to four. There was a large attendance and general branch topics, the Crusade, and brotherhood suppers were discussed. Thursday evening at the branch rooms, in spite of the holiday, about 150 convened to listen to the address on "Theosophy and Christianity." It is almost bringing coals to Newcastle to carry Theosophy to Dr. Buck's headquarters, but many strangers were present who were new to the subject. At Dayton, the 27th, an E. S. T. meeting was held at 1 P. M. and a lecture given in the evening.

LOTUS CIRCLE NEWS.

THE ARYAN LOTUS CIRCLE opens its meetings by a child sounding a triangle three times. Quiet piano music follows and then two songs. A child acts as Asst. Secretary and reads the minutes of the previous meeting. The Supt. gives a three or five minute talk in order to sound the keynote for the lesson, and more singing is then followed by the half-hour lesson. The sounding of the triangle brings this to a close and singing is followed by questions on the lesson and numerous illustrations. For example, "One Life in All" was made vivid by seven small children, holding each a little colored candle, which in turn, each lighted from a large white candle. Also the burning of iron filings and of lycopodium, gave brilliant exhibition of life, and the same life in things so apparently different and lifeless.

"How Things Grow" was illustrated by pictures and descriptions of plant and animal life, then each child was given a tiny thumb-pot in which each planted two beans, carrying the pot home, to *see* how they grew and to write a story about it. The last Sunday of the month, when possible, the lesson is chiefly illustrated by dialogue. Nov. 29 the subject being "Cyclic Manifestation" and it being our great Thanksgiving Season, the dialogue took the form of "The Way Thanksgiving Began." Represented by the up-to-date "Nineteenth Century Girl," who wants to know the "real truth" about it, and the "Pilgrim Maiden," Mary Chilton, who being the first to land from the ship, knows all about it. Music in varying moods accompanied the dialogue, which ended in a burst of enthusiasm from the Nineteenth Century girl, who is thrilled by the dramatic recital of the noble principles illustrated in the lives of our brave Pilgrim Fathers, and unfurling a flag above her head, she calls to "children all, *we* are the standard bearers of the future—upward and onward let us go, in the red of courage, the blue of hope and the white of our ideals,—constant and unswerving—to the attainment of the *final freedom* that lies within ourselves." The music changes to "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," which everyone joins in singing.

The manual is carefully followed in detail as to suggestions and illustrations and analogy to child's own experience is constantly brought out. The children practically do everything. When folk-lore is used, a child tells the stories and seeks for the Nature and Spirit meaning underneath. Each Sunday everything that is done, is kept in harmony in the keynote for the day—making one clear tone throughout.

THE BUFFALO LOTUS CIRCLE, Number One, with an average attendance of 45 children under Mr. Victor Orth as superintendent is doing excellent work. The children are deeply interested in the work of the circle and there is a strong staff of teachers, who do not wait to crowd all their work into the one hour on Sunday morning, but work faithfully for the cause on all seven days of the week.

THE HARGROVE LOTUS CIRCLE, Syracuse, N. Y. This Lotus Circle was started Oct. 18th, and at first met with discouraging results but later has met with decided success. The above name was chosen by a vote of all the children. There are at present besides the adults, thirteen children, many of whom are not allowed to attend churches. They seem to greatly appreciate the Circle.

THE ORIENTAL DEPARTMENT.

The Editor of the Oriental Department announces a change, to inaugurate the fourth year of the present series. The translations and commentaries will no longer be exclusively scientific and philosophic in character, as heretofore; an effort will be made to illustrate the poetry and traditions of Ancient India, to show what they contain of greatest beauty, and highest interest for human life, while at the same time other aspects of literature will be touched on. For instance, it is proposed to include, in the January number, a series of examples of Indian humor, chosen from the most popular of Sanskrit story-books, and this series will be continued throughout the year. A move has already been made in the direction of more general interest, in the November number, which contains a translation of the Wedding of Damayanti, one of the heroines of ancient Indian song. It is interesting to note that, in the warrior race, the tradition for ages has been that the lady should choose her husband,—in sharp contrast with the marriages by astrology of the priestly caste.

With this great extension of subject, and much more general character, the Oriental Department should more than double the number of its subscribers; and we may predict that the promised illustrations of archaic wit will largely contribute to that end. The first of these will be the story of the pious tiger.

NOTICE TO BRANCH SECRETARIES.

THE FORUM will publish in January a complete list of the branches of the T. S. in America, the time and place of their meetings and the name and address of their secretaries. Branch Secretaries will please send in this information in regard to their branches at once to

THE EDITOR, THEOSOPHICAL FORUM,
144 Madison Avenue, New York City.

THE CRUSADE.

PURPLE PENCE REPORT.

The November collections from the Purple Pence boxes showed up about the same in number and amount as those of October.

The committee desire to thank most heartly all these friendly helpers not merely for their money but also for that tremendous propulsive force which grows out of the daily pounding of a thousand moral blows all directed at one object; in this case the uplifting of the human race.

This regular coin deposit each morning has become a sort of universal hand shake, so to speak, extending itself over this continent and stretching out into Europe and Asia. It is like the touching of a thousand electric buttons, each ringing a note of help and hope in the hearts of our far away Crusaders which resounding with the sweet tones of loyalty and love at the New York headquarters, is again repeated back through the FORUM to its thousand givers. And right here comes a thought! Do not after emptying your boxes on the 13th day of each month lay the coins aside to be used over again for convenience sake during the following month. *Get them into circulation* as widely and as quickly as possible. Every one is a talisman charged with the magnetism of sacrifice and good intent and whosoever hand they meet thereafter cannot fail in some degree to be affected. No explanation need go with this suggestion; the least amongst us sees its portent and knows its virtue. And now the thanks of the committee are due to last month's contributors for the generally neat and handy manner in which the remittances were fowarded. Nearly all of them came in the shape of checks or money orders, thus saving much time and labor in the handling at this end and ensuring both safety and accuracy. Even for small amounts it will be best to use Post Office orders in preference to bills, coin or stamps. As stated in last month's FORUM receipts will hereafter be sent only to those persons who enclose an addressed stamped envelope or (preferably) a self addressed postal card with a receipt already written out and requiring only the signature of the Treasurer. (This will save over twenty dollars a month to the fund.)

Let me add in closing a word to those members of the T. S. who have as yet not seen fit to join in these P. P. contributions. Do not be ashamed to take hold with us in this modest daily offering. If you could see the letters coming from all classes of people in the Society (and some out of it), high and lowly, rich and poor, showing what a bond of fellowship and element of strength this institution has developed into, you would surely feel impelled to lend a hand. If the entire membership of the T. S. would respond in the same proportionate monthly donations as those now coming in, almost the entire expense of the Crusade could thus be met, the expenditure an account of which up to present writing has reached the sum of nineteen thousand dollars.

Sincerely yours,

A. H. SPENCER,

for the Committee.

PROGRESS OF THE CRUSADE.

The Crusaders left Piraeus, the port of Athens, on Sunday, October 4th, and reached Alexandria, Tuesday morning, the 6th, where they had their first glimpse, and received their first impressions of the East, with its manners and customs which seem indeed strange to a Westerner when for the first time he meets with them. Going on to Cairo the same day the Crusaders began at once to accomplish the work laid out for them there, and that they were kept busy we may judge from the fact that they saw scarcely anything of the ordinary sights of Cairo, save the Pyramids.

THE WORK IN EGYPT.

A Theosophical Society in Egypt was founded with a prominent Egyptian official, near to the Khedive, as its president, and is said to have both an important work to do, and a splendid future before it. As regards other work which was done, Mr. Patterson says, in a letter to the *Theosophical News*:

"Furthermore, as was foretold last May, a connection has been made with a large and important body of students of mysticism, which has been in existence for many ages. This is the third connection of this kind. These ties are of the utmost moment. There always have been organizations, in different parts of the world, devoted to the investigation of the hidden life, searching for the very springs of existence. But never before has there been an effort to bring these different groups into rapport with one another over the whole world. This has not been done yet—and there should be no misunderstanding on this

point; but the first steps have been taken. In time, from amongst these and from amongst others, some will rise up who, understanding man and his needs, will become part of a body which is not a body, an organization which is not an organization. Bound by no rules or regulations, acting according to the divine order, pledged to obey the Eternal Voice, they will labor side by side, without rank or emblem, known only to one another as comrades, their beneficent influence unsuspected by most men, until all shall have joined the immortal ranks."

The visit to the Pyramids and the Sphinx with its ancient temple was one of the interesting events of the Crusaders' stay in Egypt. It is useless to attempt to describe the Pyramids to one who has not seen them. It is easy to imagine what the mere appearance of colossal pyramids would be, but it is difficult to describe the effect of them resting upon the borders of the desert, and silently watching under the cloudless Egyptian sky over the broad and fertile Nile valley. The most ancient monuments of man, and doubtless such as will outlive any later constructions that we now know of.

E. T. H., in *Theosophy*, says of the interior of the great pyramid *Kheops*: "It is significant that the thousands of tourists who annually visit this gigantic relic of antiquity have done nothing to diminish the mysterious solemnity of the interior, with its king's chamber, queen's chamber and subterranean crypt. The silence is indescribable; but it is not a dead silence, for the whole colossal structure palpitates with life and power.

"The Sphinx, hewn out of the natural rock, is not less wonderful. Neither its origin nor its purpose have ever been made public. The Temple of the Sphinx or of Chephren, as it is sometimes called, is also of profound interest. Built of enormous blocks of granite, lined with slabs of alabaster, in many cases twelve feet long and six feet wide, it stands as an imperishable memorial of Egypt's material prosperity and spiritual greatness, for it has lost none of its influence as a temple, in the true sense of that word. Altogether an extraordinary place, never to be forgotten. Of Egypt's ancient religion, which some day must surely be revived, this is no place to speak. Its symbolism contains some of the greatest truths of nature, only thinly veiled, and is of course a mine of wealth for every student of Theosophy."

ON TO INDIA.

The Crusaders left Cairo, October 11th, and after a night at Port Said embarked the following morning on S. S. "Singapore" for Bombay. They were several days ahead of their proposed itinerary, but Mr. Patterson, in the letter above quoted, gives an interesting account of part of their first day on the Red Sea, October 13th.

"Whilst meditating, according to their daily custom, after the trip to India was begun, the bearers of the message of 'Truth, Light, and Liberation' found that on this particular day they had formed a perfect triangle in Egypt, with its base-line running directly from themselves to the Great Pyramid. Although this meditation was on shipboard, it was in the midst of the desert, and was not far from the Pyramids. The wisdom of Mrs. Tingley's changing her plans was then evident. The oneness of thought, *on that day*, with the comrades in America, and the Force passing forward to the land ahead, was most perceptible, and it could be realized that, though far from home, there was no separation."

The whole of the voyage was very hot and externally uneventful. A public meeting was held in the first cabin and one in the second, but the Crusaders spent most of their time in writing letters and preparing for the "rush of work" to be done in India.

CRUSADE ITINERARY.

Following is the itinerary, giving the principal places which the Crusaders will visit and probable dates of arrival: Calcutta, Nov. 11th; Colombo, 27th; Adelaide, Dec. 15th; Hobart, Jan. 3d; Sydney, 26th; Hongkong, Feb. 25th; Yokohama, Mar. 6th.

T. S. IN INDIA.

A telegram from Benares announced that societies had been formed there and in four other places.